

Claims

1. A method of deciding a policy for controlling communications in a communication system, the method comprising the steps of:
 - determining a type of an access network associated with communications via a gateway; and
 - deciding a policy to apply to communications via the gateway based on information regarding the type of the access network.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, comprising the further steps of:
 - signalling data from an entity associated with the access network to the gateway; and
 - determining the type of the access network based on said data.
3. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the step of signalling data comprises sending type information from the entity to the gateway.
4. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the signalling step comprises signalling data from the entity, in which the entity associated with the access network comprises a node connected to the access network.
5. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the signalling step comprises signalling data from the entity, in which the entity associated with the access network comprises a user equipment.

6. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the step of signalling data comprises sending a request for a data bearer.

7. A method as claimed in claim 6, comprising the step of including information regarding the type of the access network in a request for a data bearer.

8. A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the step of sending comprises sending the request, in which the request comprises another request for creation of a packet data protocol context.

9. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of determining the type of the access network comprises determining the type in the gateway.

10. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the step of determining comprises determining the type of an access network based on the address of the entity associated with the access network.

11. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the step of determining the type of the access network comprises the sub-steps of:

determining the type of the access network supported by the entity associated with the access network; and

determining the type of the access network from the access type supported by the entity associated with the access network.

12. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the step of determining the type of the access network comprises determining the type of the access network based on a characteristics of a message signalled from the entity associated with the access network to the gateway.

13. A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of identifying a communication session by the gateway.

14. A method as claimed in claim 13, comprising the step of determining in the gateway if a service specific policy is already available for the identified communication session.

15. A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of deciding if a decision by a policy controller is required.

16. A method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising resolving the address of an appropriate policy controller entity the according to the gateway.

17. A method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising the step of sending a request to the policy controller entity, wherein the request contains information regarding the type of the access network.

18. A method as claimed in claim 15, comprising the further step of sending an enquiry for a subscription profile from a policy controller entity to a separate database.

19. A method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising authorising a user and making a policy decision in a policy controller entity.

20. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of deciding the policy comprises selecting an access network specific policy.

21. A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising determining if the access network operates in accordance with one of:

a second generation standard, a third generation standard, or a wireless local area network standard.

22. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of deciding the policy comprises deciding a service specific policy.

23. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the deciding step comprises deciding the policy based on the information of the type of the access network,

wherein the information is one of a quality of service policy, a security policy, and a charging rule.

24. A method of controlling communications via a gateway, the method comprising the step of:

deciding a control policy by determining a type of an access network associated with communications via a gateway; and

deciding the control policy applied to communications via the gateway based on information regarding the type of the access network.

25. A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium, said program comprising program code means for performing steps when run on a computer, for deciding a policy for controlling communications in a communication system, the steps comprising:

determining a type of an access network associated with communications via a gateway; and

deciding a policy to apply to communications via the gateway based on information regarding the type of the access network.

26. A communication system comprising:

different access networks;

a gateway for communication with entities associated with the different access networks;

access network type determination means to determine a type of an access network of the different access networks; and

a decision making entity to decide a policy to apply to communications via the gateway based on information of the type of the access network,

wherein the communication system controls communications based on decisions by the decision making entity.

27. A communication system as claimed in claim 26, wherein an entity associated with the access network comprises a node connected to the access network.

28. A communication system as claimed in claim 26, wherein an entity associated with the access network comprises a user equipment.

29. A communication system as claimed in claim 26, comprising a policy controller entity to provide the decision making entity.

30. A communication system as claimed in claim 26, wherein the decision making entity is provided in the gateway.

31. A gateway for communication with entities associated with different access networks of a communication system, the gateway comprising:

an access network type determining means to determine a type of an access network; and

a decision making means to decide a control policy to apply to communications via a gateway based on information of the type of the access network, wherein the gateway controls traffic flows based on decisions by the decision making means.